

Guidelines for the handling of Covid-19 on vessels manned and operated by IMR

The purpose of these guidelines is to give practical guidance for establishing efficient barriers to prevent the Covid-19 from entering vessels manned and operated by IMR, to prevent the spreading of Covid-19 if the virus is present on board, as well as reduce the consequence if someone becomes ill.

Norway has now implemented step 4 and the reopening of society, at the same time there are many countries that still have challenges.

1. General

It is important to follow the guidelines from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH) for infection control and entry rules for the countries the individual travels from/to.

2. Ways to prevent the Covid-19 virus to enter the vessels

- a) We encourage everyone to carry out vaccination continuously based on notices.
- b) If you feel sick before a cruise, it is very important to inform your employer representative and to stay at home.
- c) Personnel from abroad
For persons arriving in Norway to board as a crew or cruise participant, they shall comply with the current rules regarding quarantine and testing:
<https://www.NIPH.no/en/id/infectious-diseases/coronavirus/>
- d) When quarantine of personnel is requested, this shall not be carried out on board the vessel.

3. Measures to be taken if Covid-19 infection is suspected

The following measures are recommended if Covid-19 infection is suspected:

- Immediately isolate the infected person(s) and others in the same cohort in single cabin(s).
It is not recommended to use the vessel's hospital as an isolation unit.
- Persons with Covid-19 symptoms to be tested with antigen test as soon as possible on board.
- Inform IMR/Research Vessel Department that a Covid-19 outbreak is suspected.
- The captain assesses whether possible infected and proven infected should be sent ashore, and if so:
 - Contact Radio Medico for advice and guidance.
 - Contact VTS Vardø to get allocated port of entry.
 - Inform the local harbor master in port of entry.
 - Contact local health authorities to agree on time and place for Covid-19 testing and if necessary, follow up medical treatment.

4. Measures to reduce the consequences of a Covid-19 outbreak

For all cruises which result in the vessel (a) being outside the reach of a rescue service or (b) being south of Brest in France, all on board shall show a valid Corona certificate no later than one week before departure. The certificate must be valid for the entire length of the cruise. This arrangement will apply as long as the health authorities in Norway maintains the corona certificate scheme.

Employees who do not want or can present the certificate will be relocated to another service of the same type as the one they should have for the duration of the cruise (with practical

adjustments). Wages are not affected by such relocation.

The Captain must ensure that there is sufficient amounts of PPE and related consumables on board at any time.

Those who are in close contact with a Covid-19 patient must use the required PPE, such as a head visor or goggles, face mask, protection suit and gloves.

5. Other

a) Sick leave and compensation for time spent in quarantine

Rules for sick leave and compensation can vary between employers. For IMR staff it is different for land-based personnel and maritime crew.

For land-based staff: Check Hinnsiden.

For maritime crew:

Seafarers who are set in quarantine outside their home before going on board, e.g. in a hotel, will be compensated with 2/30 days salary pr day. If quarantined the end of a work period on board, e.g. when travelling back to country of residence, no compensation will be given.

Seafarers who sets themselves in quarantine based on own state of health (Covid-19 symptoms) does not need a health declaration from medical personnel if not able to report for duty on board.

b) Personnel who are in a Covid-19 high-risk group as defined by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health:

Covid-19 high risk personnel should consult with their local GP or a seafarer's doctor if it is advisable to go on a cruise.

Get a sick leave statement if deemed necessary. Travel restrictions to be informed to the Captain, the IMR Crew manager, and/or the Cruise leader immediately.

Immunosuppressive drugs lower the effect of Covid-19 vaccine. It is therefore important that those to whom this applies, inform the Captain or HR manager at the Vessel Department of all health conditions.

If any questions, contact:

Terje-Chr. Karoliussen

Chief HSEQ Officer, Research Vessel Department

Institute of Marine Research

Mobile: +47 99 33 29 04

E-mail: terje-christian.karoliussen@hi.no

Cross references

Risk Assessment COVID-19 Research Vessels <https://www.hi.no/en/hi/cruises-and-field-work/imrs-research-vessels-department/covid-19-related-information-cruise-and-vessel>

External references

Norwegian Institute of Public Health <https://www.NIPH.no/en/>